

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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R 031439Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0848

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT SOCI SCUL SEDU ET

SUBJECT: AFCC TERMINATES "IMPERIAL SCHOLARSHIPS" FOR CHILDREN OF
PRIVILEGED CLASSES

1. SUMMARY. IN FURTHER MOVE AGAINST ETHIOPIAN ARISTOCRACY ON AUGUST 31, AFCC ANNOUNCED TERMINATION OF "IMPERIAL SCHOLARSHIPS" FOR CHILDREN OF HIGH OFFICIALS STUDYING ABROAD UNLESS SUCH SCHOLARSHIPS EARNED THROUGH MERIT AND/OR COMPETITION. FURTHERMORE, EMPLOYED STUDENTS PREVIOUSLY FINANCED IN THIS PREFERENTIAL MANNER WILL BE REQUIRED TO REPAY GOVERNMENT COST OF THEIR FOREIGN EDUCATION. END SUMMARY.

2. FOR MANY YEARS MINED BUDGET HAS CARRIED LINE-ITEM FOR "FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS." THESE APPROPRIATED FUNDS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN USED TO PAY INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR ETHIOPIAN COMPETITIVELY AWARDED FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS, INCLUDING DONOR SCHOLARSHIPS. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, THESE FUNDS ALSO USED -- ALLEGEDLY BY IMPERIAL DIRECTIVE -- TO SEND ABROAD STUDENTS FROM INFLUENTIAL ROYAL, MILITARY AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT FAMILIES ON NON-COMPETITIVE,
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NON-MERITORIOUS BASIS. WE THINK 10-20 STUDENTS FROM FAMILIES OF

TOP-RANKING OFFICIALS ANNUALLY FINANCED THROUGH THIS METHOD AT ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF US\$100,000 - \$175,000 IN PUBLIC FUNDS.

3. AS PART OF ITS CONTINUING CRACKDOWN ON ARISTOCRACY MALFEASANCE, PARA ONE DECISION TAKEN AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED. DECISION WILL REPORTEDLY NOT AFFECT ETHIOPIANS STUDYING ABROAD ON GOVERNMENT AND FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS GIVEN ON COMPETITIVE/MERITORIOUS BASIS. HOWEVER, EMBASSY HAS HAD ONE REPORT THAT SOME ELEMENTS IN AFCC/CABINET BELIEVE FOREIGN STUDY BY ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS SHOULD BE POSTPONED IN LINE WITH PUTTING SERVICE TO COUNTRY FIRST. EVEN PRIVATELY FINANCED STUDY ABROAD IS COMING UNDER INCREASING SUSPICION REGARDING SOURCE AND MAGNITUDE OF FUNDS. HOWEVER, IT DOUBTFUL THAT ANY BUT POLITICALLY INFLUENCED SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE TERMINATED AND STUDENTS RECALLED.

4. IN SEPTEMBER 3 ETHIOPIAN HERALD EDITORIAL ON ABOVE SUBJECT, PAPER NOTES THIS PRACTICE OF NOBILITY RECEIVING EDUCATION ABROAD AT PUBLIC EXPENSE HAS GONE ON FOR THIRTY YEARS AND MONEY THUS SPENT ON PRIVILEGED FEW SHOULD BE PAID BACK. EDITORIAL GOES ON TO ATTACK PRACTICE OF ARISTOCRACY SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO FOREIGN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (ENGLISH, GERMAN, AMERICAN, MISSIONARY), NOTING ADDIS HAS SCHOOLS FOR EXPLOITERS' DEPENDENTS AND SCHOOLS FOR POOR CHILDREN.

5. COMMENT: AS (A) NATIONAL SYSTEM OVER-PRODUCED SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES; (B) COMPETITION TO ENTER HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS INCREASED AT HOME; AND (C) GRADUATES WITH INDIGENOUS BACHELOR DEGREES BECAME MORE COMMON, PRESSURE FOR FOREIGN DEGREES HAS INCREASED. THESE SAME FACTORS, ESPECIALLY COMPETITION AND DISGUST OVER BOLD PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF THE POWERFUL (TWELVE OF WHOM LISTED BY NAME TOGETHER WITH SUBSIDY GRANTED THEIR CHILDREN) INCREASINGLY EXPOSED ELITIST PRACTICE TO ATTACK. DECISION TO TERMINATE ABUSIVE PRACTICE WILL BE ESPECIALLY POPULAR WITH STUDENTS AT TIME WHEN AFCC UNDER STUDENT PRESSURE TO MOVE FASTER ON REFORMS.

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